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New York

President:	Mr. Kim Sook	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

European Union

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Baroness Ashton.

Baroness Ashton: I want to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, and the Security Council for inviting me to address the Council on this occasion. I want to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its presidency and membership in the Council, as well as Argentina, Australia, Rwanda and Luxemburg on their election to the Security Council — especially Luxembourg as a first-time member.

I would like today to present the different ways in which, I think, the European Union (EU) contributes to international peace and security. Our contribution should be seen in the context of the strong and long-standing commitment we have to effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its core. I want to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a good partner and a good friend. The European Union has always strongly supported his actions. His current efforts to broker peace in the Great Lakes region is just one case in point.

I believe that the European Union's contribution is three-fold: our ability to marshall a wide range of instruments in what we call a comprehensive approach; our direct involvement in international negotiations, including mediation, on behalf of the international community; and our close work with our international and regional partners, where only collective efforts can deliver results. A particular strength of the European Union is its ability to respond to a crisis with a wide range of tools and instruments — short- and long-term, humanitarian and development, security and political.

We are particularly pleased that the long-standing engagement of the EU in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, as set out in the Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa and carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations, has contributed to the recent breakthrough in the political process and in terms of security in that region. Through our missions, we have contributed to greatly reducing piracy; it dropped by 95 per cent over the past two years. Through our development cooperation and political support, we contribute to lasting security, what I have coined "deep democracy" and prosperity.

I was pleased to receive the Somali President, Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who expressed his country's appreciation for the EU's efforts at the end of last month, although he also called for the continued and comprehensive engagement of the European Union and the international community. It is imperative that we all join in that support to ensure effective and continued progress, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2013/69) emphasizes.

Our support to Mali and the Sahel should also be seen in the context of a comprehensive European engagement. The current crisis in Mali provides us with a challenging test case. The threat posed by terrorist groups is a threat not only to the existence of one country, but also to the security of a region and the international community. It calls for swift and coordinated international action, and, of course, the United Nations plays a leading role in that.

The situation on the ground changes rapidly. Thanks to the intervention of France, which responded to the Malian President's appeal for help, we are witnessing rapid advances in the liberation of the north of Mali. We have also seen progress regarding the adoption of a road map by the Malian authorities to restore democracy and constitutional rule and faster deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). For all that, challenges and threats still remain.

What we have called our comprehensive approach is an integral part of that international response. Humanitarian aid has been increased by an additional €20 million from €58 million in 2012. We have also contributed through security-related measures, such as the EU training mission to help the Malian Army to be restructured under civilian authority. We have given considerable financial and logistical support to AFISMA. We have made available €50 million through

the African Peace Facility and established a clearing house to channel national contributions.

Our political support for Mali focuses on supporting the concrete implementation of the road map, support for the electoral process and, what is extremely important, an inclusive national dialogue, especially with representatives of the people from the north of Mali. We have also provided economic support by resuming EU development aid. We are making available more than €250 million for new projects across the entire country and for budgetary assistance.

It is important that the Malian authorities investigate all allegations of human rights abuses. We support the United Nations intention to deploy human rights observers to Mali, and we welcome the decision by the International Criminal Court to open investigations.

Lasting peace and reconciliation and reconstruction require long-term commitments on the part of the international community. The donors conference on 29 January, as well as the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, the third ministerial meeting of which we were proud to host last week, have helped to further mobilize international support.

But we need to do more. It is important to stress the central coordinating role that has been assigned to the United Nations under resolution 2085 (2012). We appreciate the leadership that the Security Council has shown, as well as the recognition that the Council has given to our efforts. All of us need to support the United Nations in taking on greater responsibility for, for example, peacekeeping, particularly in what will be a crucial stabilization phase.

We will also continue to play our role in the broader framework of our Sahel strategy, and we look forward to working closely with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Romano Prodi, in the context of the upcoming integrated United Nations strategy for the Sahel.

In my role as High Representative/Vice-President, I am responsible for dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme, and, as the Council knows, the Iranian nuclear issue remains at the top of the international agenda. Based on the mandate we have received from the Security Council, and working together with what I describe as the E3+3 Governments, but they are also known as the five plus one group — there are six either way — we are engaging in intensive diplomatic efforts to seek a negotiated solution that meets the international community's concerns about the Iranian nuclear programme. After very lengthy consultations, we were able to agree on the next round of talks to be held on 26 February in Kazakhstan. We hope Iran will come to that negotiation with flexibility and that we can make substantial progress.

Our strength and credibility in negotiating with Iran derives from the E3+3, but also from the more general support that we receive from the international community. I am very grateful for the constant support of the Security Council, and I would add that our cooperation with and support to the International Atomic Energy Agency is also very important. We remain determined to work towards a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue based on the dual-track approach. There is no doubt that the pressure of sanctions has been instrumental in bringing Iran back to the negotiating table, but sanctions cannot be an end in themselves. The key is for Iran to comply fully with its international obligations.

Like the Security Council, the European Union has condemned in the strongest possible terms the latest nuclear test of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a further blatant challenge to the global non-proliferation regime and an outright violation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, in particular under Security Council resolutions.

It remains vital therefore that the international community stays united and determined. We will work with key partners, especially with the Council, to build a firm and unified response aimed at demonstrating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that there are consequences for its continued violations. We once again urge them to abandon their nuclear weapons programme, including the uranium enrichment programme, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

In the European Union, I take responsibility for facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, between Prime Ministers Thaçi and Dačić. So far this has led to some concrete results. We have an agreement to take forward the implementation of integrated border/boundary management, and as a result four gates are now open and fully operational. We have an agreement on arrangements for the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and we have an agreement to appoint liaison officers to be hosted in the European Union offices in Belgrade and Pristina.

As the Council may have noted, last week the two Presidents, Serbian President Nikolić and Kosovan President Jahjaga, met in Brussels for the first time, marking an important step between Belgrade and Pristina. The process continues; a new meeting with the two Prime Ministers will take place next week in Brussels. I want to take this opportunity to commend Prime Minister Dačić and Prime Minister Thaçi for the way they have approached these discussions, and for the courage they have shown in doing so. It is not an easy process for either of them, but they have our full support, and I also count on the support of the Council.

We are also working closely with partners to address some of the more difficult challenges to international peace and security. Here, I want to mention briefly Syria and the Middle East peace process. In the Middle East peace process, we believe that the time has come for concrete steps to be made towards peace, to see direct and substantial negotiations and to achieve a lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on two States — a solution that addresses both Palestinian aspirations to statehood and sovereignty and Israeli concerns about security. We believe there is an urgent need for renewed, structured and substantial peace efforts in 2013 that will require work with all international partners, including the United Nations and the League of Arab States. The European Union position remains that we will not recognize changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by the parties.

We suggest that the following parameters could be a basis for resuming negotiations. We see security arrangements that respect the Palestinians' sovereignty, protect Israel's security and prevent the resurgence of terrorism as key. There must be an agreed, just and fair solution to the question of refugees, and a fulfilment of the aspirations of both parties for the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

It will be important to set up an internationally supported framework for negotiations. I would like to highlight in this regard the role of the Secretary-General in the Quartet, and to strongly support the important work done by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Special Coordinator Robert Serry on the ground. We will continue to work with all those who are willing to join the quest for peace, stability and prosperity in the Middle East, and in so doing to recognize the critical importance of regional involvement. We think of Jordan and the role that His Majesty the King has played, and of other Arab nations, including at this time the role of Egypt in what has happened in Gaza, and, of course, the whole question of Palestinian reconciliation. All of us, I would argue, should engage.

In our efforts to support Syria, we coordinate closely with all partners at the bilateral, multilateral and inter-institutional levels. We give lasting support to the United Nations through common actions and initiatives, which are crucial to preserving the role of the Security Council. That includes tackling grave human rights abuses and war crimes.

We stand firmly behind the complex mission of Joint Special Representative Brahimi. We hope his plans will result in concrete initiatives by the Council to make the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) operational. We also welcome the recent statements made by the President of the Syrian coalition, Sheikh Mouaz Al-Khatib, who has proposed launching discussions with acceptable representatives of the Syrian Government. We encourage the Syrian authorities to seize this opportunity. If together we can set up the right conditions and a timetable for discussions and add important confidence-building measures, we might be able to build new momentum for what has so far been a most difficult challenge.

But in addition to our political efforts, we have remained an important donor of humanitarian aid to Syria; the financial support of the EU and its member States is now €600 million. We have also imposed EU-wide sanctions against the regime, and we are working on improving the operational capacity of the Syrian opposition coalition, which we accept as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people.

It will be equally important to engage in planning for the future and to closely involve the Syrian opposition coalition in that process. The EU will support a political transition with effective measures on the ground, institutional and economic recovery, post-conflict accountability and needs-disaster assessment.

I have not been able today to refer to all the various contributions of the EU to the work of the United Nations. I have very much limited myself to what are perhaps the most pressing issues. But we harbour a strong belief in effective multilateralism and wish to be a good and supportive partner to the United Nations. Let me end by acknowledging the great responsibility of the Council for steering the international community

away from conflict and confrontation. In carrying out its tasks, it can count on the full commitment and support of the European Union.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I would also like to welcome the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. France naturally associates itself with the European Union's vision and commitment in the service of an effective multilateralism in full cooperation with the Council, which she has just briefed us on.

I would like to emphasize three aspects of the European Union's contribution to achieving the goals of the United Nations. First, the European Union remains a unique model of cooperation and integration in the service of peace and security on the continent of Europe. As Ms. Ashton explained, today the European Union is playing its part in the very heart of the continent, in the Balkans, where war once raged. It promotes bilateral dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and offers them a prospect of integration within a larger geographic context. Kosovo's period of supervised independence came to an end without incident on 10 September of last year. That is a success for the entire international community and one that the European Union can fully share in. The opening at the highest level of a new phase of political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, under the auspices of the European Union, expands that effort. I also commend last week's meeting in Brussels between the Serbian and Kosovar Presidents. This dialogue confirms the willingness of both parties to normalize relations in the context of their European rapprochement, which, we hope, will enable the two countries to turn the page on their conflicts.

The European Union also possesses the tools needed to act beyond the European continent in the service of the system of collective security of which the Council is the cornerstone. Exactly two years ago, the High Representative briefed the Council (see S/PV.6477) on the creation of the European External Action Service, an important milestone in the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty. Since then, these developments have helped to strengthen the European Union's contribution to collective peace and security and thus to become a valuable partner for the United Nations. To give a few examples, as Ms. Ashton said, the African forces that make up the African-led International Support Mission in Mali, authorized by resolution 2085 (2012) in December, began their deployment in support of the Malian armed forces in restoring State security. Through the African peace facility, the European Union helps by contributing to paying their wages.

It also provides support in reshaping the Malian defence apparatus. The deployment, beginning in mid-March, of a European Union training mission is also part of the same goal of restoring Malian sovereignty. The mission, which is 500 people strong and includes 172 trainers, will also provide for the training in one year of four battalions of 650 Malian soldiers each. Its support in the quest for a political solution in Mali demonstrates the European Union's global approach, according to which they have recently managed to release their economic aid to help restart the country's development and thus lay the foundations for a sustainable peace.

Furthermore, on another topic, despite the ongoing stalemate in the Council, the European Union has made a firm commitment to a democratic transition in the Syrian Arab Republic. That is why it was swift to condemn the bloody oppression carried out by the Bashar Al-Assad regime and considers the Syrian national coalition as the legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. It has shown, in this crisis, its willingness and ability to act. Starting in May 2011, the European Union deployed a wide array of individual, financial and trade sanctions against the regime. With over €400 million delivered in humanitarian assistance, the European Union and its member States have provided significant aid to ease the plight of the Syrian population, including refugees. The European Union has always supported the efforts of the Joint Special Representative to find a political solution to the conflict.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, the High Representative has been intervening as a facilitator in the dialogue with Tehran. We thank her for her intensive efforts and exemplary commitment, working alongside the E3+3 Governments, to keeping the door to dialogue open. A new meeting with Iran will take place in Almaty on 26 February. It will be an opportunity for Iran to make, without further delay, the goodwill gesture that the international community expects from it in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors. As long as Iran does not comply with its obligations, we will fulfil our responsibilities and increase pressure in order to convince it to abandon its policy of isolation and provocation.

The European Union and its member States are fully committed to playing their role in that issue, setting up a very strong sanctions apparatus. We continue to believe that firmness is still the best guarantee for the achievement of a long-term diplomatic solution, which is the goal we all share.

Finally, the European Union provides support to the work of the Security Council on several crosscutting issues, showing thus that it is a major partner of the United Nations in defining prospects for progress in international affairs. It promotes the role of women in crisis exit strategies, as is the case in Afghanistan, through the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan, where a clear effort has been made to increase the number of female police officers.

With respect to the protection of children in armed conflict, I thank the European Union for the ongoing support provided to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

I will conclude by recalling that the special role played by the European Union led two years ago to the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 65/276. That resolution affirmed the role of the European Union as a partner, pillar and friend of the United Nations, not just as a regional organization but also as a pillar of a coherent and effective international system.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): I would like to thank the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Catherine Ashton, for her statement, insights and analysis on a number of contemporary challenges to global peace and security.

The establishment of international peace and security is an important task that cannot be accomplished by a single entity acting alone. Cooperation, communication and assistance among the responsible actors are vital. That spirit unites the United Nations and the European Union and leads them to merge their efforts for the preservation of global peace and security.

There is an established pattern of cooperation between the two entities in a variety of areas, including, in particular, peacekeeping and conflict prevention, the protection of human rights, sustainable development and the environment, development assistance, and combating terrorism and other criminal activities. Strengthening that cooperation and the continued contribution of the European Union to the efforts of the Security Council and the United Nations more broadly are indispensable in addressing challenges to international peace and security.

I would like to speak more specifically about some geographical and thematic issues. The situation in the Middle East with regard to both the Middle East peace process and the Syrian Arab Republic still occupies the top position on the list of international security issues. While it has been exposed to conflicts and insecurity for many decades, the region has also gone through major transformation processes over the past two years. The international community must be more united and consistent in its efforts to help the regional States through these difficult times and find a peaceful and lasting solution to ongoing conflicts.

Another challenging issue is the situation in Mali, where decisive action has enabled significant advances in the restoration of Malian territorial integrity. It is essential that the international community stand ready to undertake efforts for peacebuilding, governance, security sector reform, reconstruction and regional cooperation.

At the same time, Mali is not the only country facing terrorism and violent separatism. It is therefore important to maintain consistency in deciding on responses to such situations, especially those aggravated by external political, military and economic support in violation of international law and Security Council resolutions.

Issues relating to the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the rule of law have become some of the major topics on the international agenda. However, despite increasing attention to those topics, issues of accountability in certain conflict or post-conflict situations have often been overlooked. As a result, erroneous policies and behaviours that contradict international law and its basic norms and principles have often been allowed to remain, under the cloak of impunity, and garner the potential of further destabilizing the situation by thwarting the achievement of peace and fomenting future conflicts and related crimes. We believe that the international community cannot approach selectively, or remain indifferent to, situations involving the use of military force against civilians and massive expulsions. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that such violations and other serious wrongdoings have indeed occurred during armed conflicts and have given rise to valid international concerns, an obligation to investigate and prosecute alleged offences, as an important safeguard

and tool for prevention, will definitely serve the principles of justice and the rule of law. We encourage the European Union to continue to assist the affected countries and support national and international efforts to that end.

It is essential, when dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations, that the relevant organizations and entities ensure that peace and justice are both present in a mutually reinforcing manner. Such an approach ensures that no peace settlement is reached that is inconsistent with international law. That understanding is particularly important, as it would provide guidance not only for the parties to the conflict but also for the international community as a whole and, when appropriate, mediation efforts.

In situations of unresolved conflict, the lack of agreement on political issues cannot be used as a pretext for marginalizing problems caused by continued and deliberate disrespect for international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. It is therefore crucial to insist on the importance, with respect to such situations, of reaffirming the continued applicability of all relevant international legal norms and standards. We encourage the European Union to consistently address concerns in that regard and support relevant national initiatives to that end within the United Nations. At the same time, it is also important to carefully approach ideas having the initially declared purpose of fostering confidence-building measures but that in reality carry the danger of sustaining the status quo created as a result of the unlawful use of force and the commission of other serious crimes of concern to the international community.

In conclusion, let us express the hope that increased efforts and more intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union will yield better results in dealing with the many existing challenges to international peace and security.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this briefing. I join previous speakers in welcoming Mrs. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and I thank her for her briefing. As a European, I fully subscribe to Ms. Ashton's statement. I assure her of my country's full support in the Council, in the context of her mandate, to strengthen cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in promoting international peace and security.

As a founding member both of the United Nations and the European Union, Luxembourg appreciates the values shared by the two organizations. In the words of the Charter of the United Nations, those values include

> "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

The United Nations and the European Union have the same goal of promoting peace. Each represents a peace project born of the same desire to protect future generations from the scourge of war.

This third presentation to the Council by the High Representative, following those of 2010 and 2011, clearly shows that the European Union remains a reliable partner of the United Nations. The 27 members of the European Union contribute more than one-third of the ordinary and peacekeeping budgets of the United Nations. The European Union and the United Nations closely cooperate at Headquarters and on the ground. The European External Action Service and the United Nations Secretariat maintain continuous contact. Our joint actions now involve all aspects of responding to international crises, in particular emergency crisis management, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping and peacebuilding and development.

Allow me to echo the High Representative in highlighting two examples that illustrate the synergy of efforts undertaken by the European Union and the United Nations in Africa — in Somalia, in the regional context of the Horn of Africa, and in Mali, in the regional context of the Sahel. Since 2011, the European Union has developed its Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, which emphasizes the need to link security, the fight against poverty and good governance. In Somalia, the significant support of the European Union relates to those three areas.

Since its launch in March 2007, the European Union and the United Nations have supported the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). To date, the EU has contributed more than €400 million to pay the salaries of the Green Helmets and the Mission's operations in Nairobi through the African Peace Facility. AMISOM's contribution to security in Somalia is inestimable, and for now remains essential. In the medium-term, it will be up to us to decide how the international community will support Somalia in order to ensure that the Somali National Security Forces — which are supported by

an EU training programme — will be able to assume responsibility for their country's security.

Also in 2011, the European Union developed its Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. In recent months, the international community's attention has rightly focused on Mali to respond to the multifaceted crisis affecting that country. The European Union and the United Nations are dynamically engaged politically, militarily and financially to respond to a situation that threatens regional and international peace and security. In the next few months, the synergy between the European Union training mission in Mali and the stabilization mission to be established under the auspices of the United Nations will be crucial. Beyond the crisis in Mali, it is now urgent that the United Nations also develop an integrated strategy on the Sahel.

The European Union is actively committed also in the Middle East, playing a key role in the efforts of the international community with respect to the nuclear programme in Iran. Europe maintains a firm attitude in that regard, while calling for diplomacy and dialogue. We therefore welcomed the announcement that negotiations will resume between Iran and the E3+3 in Almaty on 26 February, after several months of interruption. Like the High Representative, we express the hope that those discussions will lead to significant progress towards achieving a negotiated solution.

In Syria, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate day by day. A protracted conflict will lead only to the destruction of the country. Every effort must be made to promote a negotiated political settlement of the crisis. At the start of the week, as was noted, Mr. Al-Khatib once again called upon the Syrian authorities to follow up on their initiative to talk with the aim of ending the bloodshed. We hope that the Damascus authorities will respond to that request for dialogue extended by the head of the Syrian National Coalition. As the High Representative mentioned, it will be necessary for the European Union and the United Nations to continue to work hand in hand at the political level and to provide assistance to the affected populations in Syria and in neighbouring countries.

I would like to add a comment on the peace process in the Middle East. We of course support the efforts made by the European Union as a member of the Quartet, along with the United Nations, the Russian Federation and the United States, to foster a resumption of direct talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians. If there is an area where close cooperation and engagement have added value, it is there. When the talks resume — which we hope will happen soon on the basis of a structured framework and the parameters indicated by the High Representative — the parties will require appropriate international support and determined commitment on the part of all key stakeholders.

Finally, allow me to highlight a subject that is dear to our hearts — the protection of children in armed conflict. Yesterday we celebrated the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers. We welcome the joint press statement on that subject issued by the High Representative and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflicts, Ms. Leila Zerrougui. For 10 years now, the European Union has taken a stance on children in armed conflict. The European Union and its member States can promote the protection of children in armed conflict through political dialogue and cooperation measures.

Luxembourg particularly welcomes the European Union initiative to allocate its Nobel Peace Prize money to projects devoted to child victims of war. In particular, that initiative will help to revive hope among Syrian refugee children in Iraq and the children displaced by the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo by providing them with access to basic education. In that area as in others, the European Union and the United Nations can make a difference by working together and in complementarity. Luxembourg pledges its continuous support to strengthen that partnership.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): I would like to thank High Representative Ashton for her briefing and welcome her to the Council for the third time in this capacity. Since she last briefed the Council, the European Union (EU) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The award recognizes the EU's powerful and historic contribution over six decades in advancing peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights.

The EU is, of course, is a unique experiment among nation States, born out of the most violent century in human history. All of us have a keen interest in its success. As the Council now more acutely knows, close cooperation between it and regional organizations, including the EU, can be a decisive component in our collective efforts to maintain international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations recognizes that. As a long-standing, integrated regional organization that has learned many lessons of its own over the years in developing and improving

normative frameworks for dealing with conflict and post-conflict situations, the EU is strongly placed to make a strong contribution in that regard.

I would like to thank High Representative Ashton for her hopeful analysis on some of the contemporary issues on the Council's agenda. The EU's engagement on those issues is an indication of its own strong contribution to international peace and security. We endorse her condemnation of North Korea's latest, third nuclear test. The Council itself is united in that condemnation. There have been threats of a second and even a third nuclear test to follow the one earlier this week. We must now develop a strong draft resolution with tough new sanctions. We will certainly be working closely with all Council members, including members of the EU, to achieve that quickly.

We welcome the role the EU plays in Africa in support of the African Union. The EU's assistance to the African Union Mission in Somalia has been central to the Mission's role in achieving security gains, which in turn have helped bring Somalia to a point where it can embrace the best chance it has had in a generation to build sustainable peace and stability.

We acknowledge and appreciate the EU's efforts to address the crisis in Mali through the EU training mission and support to the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) through the Africa Peace Facility. Making AFISMA operational as soon as possible remains vital whatever the final peacekeeping configuration in Mali may be. Alongside that security effort, the EU's very significant humanitarian and development assistance is an important contribution to restoring stability in that country.

On the Syrian Arab Republic, we share the EU view that the international community must do everything it can to promote a credible Syrian-led political transition to realize the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people. We also support the EU's view that those responsible for serious crimes in Syria should be held accountable. We appreciate the very significant contribution the EU is making to provide humanitarian assistance, and we encourage the EU in its efforts to ensure that its aid is delivered as effectively as possible. We will continue to work together with the EU in support of Joint Special Representative Brahimi, and agree that the Council needs to provide clearer support soon to his complex mission. We will also continue to work closely with the EU to advance one particular aspect of our collective humanitarian effort — the protection of medical workers and facilities in Syria.

This is a decisive year for the Middle East peace process. The prospect of a two-State solution is quickly disappearing. We agree with the High Representative that it is time for new effort to resuscitate the peace process. The continued support of the EU to the Palestinian Authority and its active participation in the Quartet remains essential. EU activism in support of renewed negotiations will be influential.

Regional tensions in the Middle East will only increase, as we know, unless Iran engages with the five plus one process and cooperates fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Australia appreciates the EU's critical role in pursuing dialogue with Iran to find a diplomatic solution to the international community's strong concerns about its nuclear programmes. We commend the High Representative for her personal engagement on the Middle East peace process and the Iran nuclear issue.

We also commend her role in relation to Kosovo, an issue the Council will consider next week. By mediating high-level dialogue, the EU has certainly helped to open a new constructive phase in negotiations, which has been achieving progress towards agreed solutions to outstanding differences between Belgrade and Pristina.

Australia and the EU are very close partners in global security. We work together in Afghanistan. We cooperate closely on aid delivery through joint projects in the Pacific and Indonesia, and this will soon extend to delegated cooperation arrangements elsewhere, including South Sudan and Fiji. We work closely in international sanctions regimes.

We acutely recognize that the EU and its member States play a very substantial role as partners to the United Nations. Together they form the single largest financial contributor to the United Nations system, providing a sizeable proportion of the United Nations regular budget, at almost 40 per cent, and to the United Nations peacekeeping budget, at over 40 per cent. Of course, its support is absolutely indispensable to United Nations funds and programmes. That contribution enables the EU to act as an essential multiplier of our collective efforts on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

The EU's efforts to promote democracy and the rule of law are important. Its expertise helps build capacity and promote reform in law enforcement, the judiciary

and border security. Through its election observation missions in particular, the EU has helped to deepen public trust in electoral processes and to deter voter fraud, intimidation and violence.

Its actions to tackle piracy deserve particular recognition. We commend the EU Naval Force for its work off the Horn of Africa, which has contributed to reducing Somali piracy to its lowest level since 2008. We value the EU as a continuing partner in the fight against terrorism and support its efforts to ensure that counter-terrorism remains a key priority for us. We welcome the EU activities on preventing terrorism by addressing terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

To conclude, close engagement between the Council and regional organizations is self-evidently an essential component to securing international peace and security. We encourage the Council to continue to look for opportunities to work closely with the EU in particular in that primordial objective.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Catherine Ashton, for her informative briefing on the activities of the European Union in the various areas that bring us together.

The delegation of Guatemala takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the European Union for its constructive presence in the United Nations and its important role in many activities, ranging from cooperation and development to peacekeeping, and for the contributions of its member countries to the United Nations budget.

On this occasion, I would simply like to make six brief comments, all on topics covered in the briefing of High Representative Catherine Ashton.

First, in the case of non-proliferation talks between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran, we are concerned over the deadlock in the process, and we urge the European Union to persist in its efforts. We note the additional sanctions that the European Union has applied against Iran with the ultimate aim of weakening the actions that would allow it to develop a nuclear programme. We welcome the announcement that the upcoming round of talks between the E3+3 Governments and the Islamic Republic of Iran will take place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 26 February. We hope that all parties will make their best efforts to find a negotiated solution acceptable to all, bearing in mind the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Power.

Secondly, with regard to the peace process in the Middle East, Guatemala believes that the European Union, as a member of the Quartet of core international mediators, must step up its efforts to encourage Israel and Palestine to seek a solution to the age-old conflict between them. We should spare no effort towards achieving the ultimate aim of identifying common ground in order to resume negotiations.

Thirdly, as for the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, we note that the policies of the European Union from the outset of the conflict have been based on the following actions: supporting the efforts of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to find a political solution to the conflict and to encourage a political transition; exerting pressure on the regime through the application of unilateral sanctions; and using debates within the Security Council and the United Nations system to exert pressure on the Syrian authorities.

However, those actions have not led to strategic success, since the Government has yet to commit to a serious political dialogue on the future of the country. On the contrary, while the Syrian army and the armed opposition continue to commit human rights abuses and violate international humanitarian law against the civilian population, the violence seems to escalate every day. We welcome the role of the European Union in the area of humanitarian assistance and acknowledge that its member States are the largest bloc of donor countries providing humanitarian assistance in the Syrian crisis.

Fourthly, with regard to its mediating role for the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, we congratulate the European Union, in particular High Representative Ashton, on the leadership in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. That new phase of mediation, which led to the convening of the first high-level meeting, took the process from a primarily technical to a political level, offering new prospects for resolving various long-standing issues. We encourage the parties to continue those efforts in line with the existing legal framework, namely, resolution 1244 (1999).

Fifthly, with regard to Mali, we welcome the logistical and financial support provided by the European

Union to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali. We commend the establishment of a European Union training mission in Mali in order to train the Malian armed forces in supporting the restoration of the country's territorial integrity. The mission is an integral part of the European Union's comprehensive approach to the situation in Mali and the Sahel region. We look forward with great interest to its launch in the coming weeks. We also congratulate the European Union and the High Representative Ashton on having hosted the ministerial meeting of the Support and Follow-Up Group on the Situation in Mali in Brussels on 6 February, at which the international community underscored, among other issues, the importance of respecting international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians in Mali.

Finally, Guatemala has always supported a broader development of and greater cooperation among the United Nations, the Security Council and regional and subregional mechanisms. Such cooperation should take place on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII. As a regional mechanism, the European Union has established close and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations on a wide range of key areas. We will continue to support the further strengthening of that cooperation.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to welcome Baroness Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, and to thank her for briefing the Council on the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. The European Union has been an important partner of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. In recent years, the European Union has actively participated in the discussions within the Council on regional hotspots and thematic topics.

The European Union has been working closely with United Nations in carrying out preventive diplomacy, providing good offices and promoting the settlement of disputes through peaceful means, such as mediation and negotiation, as well as through strong support to United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The European Union also actively participates in the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and plays a very positive role in peacebuilding in conflict-affected and post-conflict conflict countries.

We acknowledge the great importance that the European Union attaches to its cooperation with other regional organizations. Recently, certain hotspot issues in Africa, such as Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have become more prominent. The European Union has maintained close coordination with the African Union and African regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in providing strong assistance to their good offices and capacity-building efforts.

China appreciates the significant contribution of the European Union in maintaining regional and international peace, stability and security. It encourages and supports the European Union in continuing to play a positive and constructive role in that regard.

Dialogue and consultation are the fundamental way to bridge differences and to prevent and resolve conflicts. While the European Union has extensive experience and resources in that regard, various regional and subregional organizations have a profound understanding of and unique advantages concerning regional issues. The Security Council should strengthen its communication and coordination with various regional and subregional organizations, including the European Union, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular on the basis of more pragmatic and effective cooperation in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We welcome High Representative Baroness Ashton to the Security Council and thank her for her briefing on the European Union's cooperation with the United Nations. We join Australia in congratulating the European Union on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

Pakistan and the European Union enjoy excellent relations. The European Union is an important trading and development partner of Pakistan. Our country attaches the highest importance to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Over the years, the European Union has become a major cooperation partner of the United Nations and has made important contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security. African issues constitute the bulk of the Security Council's agenda. Although the African Union and African subregional organizations are currently working actively to resolve

conflicts in Africa, they face funding and capacity problems. The European Union has provided significant support to peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities in Africa. It has provided substantial funding for United Nations-mandated African Union peace support operations and plays an active role in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts on the continent.

The Sahel region faces serious security, humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges that have negative consequences for the long-term stability of the region. They include chronic food insecurity, underdevelopment, the impact of climate change and the rise in organized crime, including terrorism and the trafficking of drugs and weapons. The outflow of refugees from Mali, for instance, has placed an additional burden on neighbouring countries, which have already suffered from the consequences of drought. The enormous challenges in the region can be addressed effectively through a coherent strategy. The region lacks capacity and resources. It needs the support of the international community.

In that context, Pakistan supported the elaboration of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel region. The European Union is already making a significant contribution to the Sahel region through its Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel. In addition to the funds pledged under the Strategy, the European Union has also made a commitment to address the humanitarian situation in the region. We hope that the European Union will continue to support the region and to provide resources for the United Nations integrated strategy, which we expect to be finalized soon.

The situation in Mali poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the region and beyond. The crisis in Mali stems from internal causes, as well as the overall situation in the wider Sahel region. Following the French intervention, the situation has significantly improved, but the country requires sustained support on the part of the international community to consolidate peace and restore full constitutional order.

We welcome the European Union's decision to provide training to the Malian defence forces through the deployment of the European Union's training mission, as well as its commitment to contribute to the funding of the African-led international support mission for Mali, through the European Union African Peace Facility. We hope that, as a clearer picture emerges regarding the country's needs, the European Union will offer further assistance to Mali.

The European Union has also made an important contribution to consolidating peace in the Balkans. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo is providing support to Kosovo in the area of the rule of law. The European Union-mediated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has helped to bring the two sides together to resolve their outstanding disputes. The recent elevation of the dialogue to the level of Prime Ministers is an important contribution, made by Baroness Ashton herself.

The Syrian crisis has assumed catastrophic proportions. According to the Secretary-General, more than 70,000 people have died there. An estimated 4 million Syrians, including 800,000 refugees and 2 million internally displaced persons, need humanitarian assistance. The pursuit of the military option has fuelled this devastating internecine strife for the past two years. The Syrians, as one nation, have to reconcile their differences through dialogue.

With the recent statements of the opposition and the Government for dialogue without preconditions, there is a glimmer of hope for engagement. This opportunity must be seized by the Syrians, the United Nations and the European Union. Full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi will help in making the Geneva communiqué operational and giving a fresh impetus to diplomacy.

We welcome the results of the donors conference held in Kuwait on 30 January, where the international community was able to pledge $1.5 billion. We hope that those pledges will be fulfilled and materialized expeditiously to alleviate at least some part of the suffering of the Syrian people. We appreciate the humanitarian assistance that the European Union is providing to the affected people of Syria.

The Security Council has invested considerable time and effort to address the Iranian nuclear issue. It is time to reflect on and to review the objectives and strategy pursued so far. A peaceful resolution of this issue is possible on the basis of confidence-building measures while pursuing the goals of non-proliferation and respecting Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

We encourage the E3+3 and Iran to stay the course of meaningful engagement, build on the talks they have

held so far and deepen the diplomatic process for a negotiated resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue. We hope that the talks to be held on 26 February will make some headway.

We welcome Baroness Ashton's statement that the Middle East peace process should be launched again. The European Union and the Secretary-General, as members of the Quartet, can play an important role in reviving the completely stalled process. The two-State solution is in freefall. The European Union can help in reversing that trend by putting its collective political moral weight behind the efforts to persuade key States and players to come back to the negotiating table.

In conclusion, we welcome the Security Council's continued engagement and exchange of views with the European Union. We encourage the ongoing cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. Such cooperation plays an effective role in conflict prevention and in the resolution of conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): I join others in welcoming Baroness Ashton to the Council and thanking her for giving us her briefing today. These meetings are an important step in broadening and strengthening the European Union's relationship and collaboration with the United Nations and in highlighting areas where the European Union (EU) and the United Nations are already cooperating successfully in pursuit of their shared objectives.

In Syria, where the situation continues to worsen, the United Kingdom and, indeed, the European Union have remained steadfast in our support of Joint Special Representative Brahimi and his plan to take forward the establishment of a transition Government with full executive powers. We encourage others to do the same, recognizing that Al-Assad cannot be part of such a transition if it is to realize the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.

In support of transition, the European Union has introduced measures against the Al-Assad regime, imposing sanctions against those responsible for the violence and repression and applying increased economic pressure on the regime. The United Kingdom and the European Union have also provided substantial humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria through our financing of United Nations humanitarian appeals. We now need to find innovative ways of allowing humanitarian personnel to deliver assistance to those in need to alleviate the appalling situation on the ground.

In Mali and the Sahel, the international community has united to face the challenge posed by violent extremism. Building on the success of French-led action in support of Mali's territorial integrity, the Council is working towards the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation once conditions are right. The European Union will deploy a military training mission to build the capacity of the Malian armed forces to deliver stability in support of democratic governance.

European Union action in Mali, founded on its comprehensive strategy for security and development in the Sahel, continues to support those efforts by delivering vital humanitarian assistance and building security and development for people in Mali and across the region.

In all those endeavours, the European Union works hand in hand with the United Nations, particularly the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Romano Prodi, and with the Special Representative for West Africa, Said Djinnit.

The European Union and the United Nations are also working closely to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including promoting the role of women in peacebuilding and tackling impunity for sexual violence. In Mali, the United Kingdom will contribute human rights experts to the European Union military training mission to provide specialist training to the Malian armed forces on preventing and responding to sexual violence. The new United Nations Office in Mali will have a strong human rights component, which we hope will also focus closely on issues of gender and sexual violence.

In Somalia, international action in support of the Somali Government has already delivered significant gains. Here the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has led the fight against extremism, in the form of Al-Shabaab, but has been supported by both the European Union and the United Nations through troop salaries from the EU Africa Peace Facility and logistical support from the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM.

That is a good example of the EU and the United Nations working together to make a difference and to address a major challenge to international peace and security. The European Union is making a further contribution by providing training for 3,000 troops to

build up Somalia's own armed forces to fight alongside AMISOM.

We now have a real opportunity to make progress in Somalia, which we look to the United Nations, the African Union and the EU together to seize in the coming months.

As many of us in this Chamber have noted already, 2013 will be a critical year for the Middle East peace process. The European Union has worked closely with the United Nations as members of the Quartet on a number of initiatives, including delivering practical assistance to the Palestinian State-building programme and calling on Israel to ease restrictions on movement and access to the West Bank and Gaza. The EU rightly continues to underline that a political solution must be reached and remains committed to working with the United Nations, other Quartet members and the wider international community to make progress.

The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the tireless efforts of Baroness Ashton in support of the E3+3 negotiations with Iran and the continued work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The countries of the E3+3 are scheduled to meet Iran in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 26 February, to present a balanced and credible offer. The onus is firmly on Iran to come to the next talks ready to negotiate seriously and to take concrete steps to respond to international concerns over its nuclear programme.

The Security Council has adopted six resolutions on the Iranian nuclear issue, four of which contain sanctions. European Union countries have fully implemented those measures and have agreed further sanctions in support of the E3+3 Governments' dual-track strategy of pressure and engagement.

We also welcome Baroness Ashton's engagement in driving forward the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. It is important that the momentum is maintained to get both countries to reach the conditionalities set out in the December General Affairs Council conclusions, notably with regard to northern Kosovo. That process of dialogue offers the best prospect for consolidating recent progress and generating the necessary understandings and cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo, from which both countries and the region as a whole will benefit.

If recent history has taught us anything, it is that the international community acts most effectively where it acts coherently. Action by the European Union and cooperation between the European Union and others, including the United Nations, continue to make an important contribution to those efforts.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Baroness Ashton for her briefing, which underscored the many and various contributions of the European Union in cooperation with the United Nations to the promotion of peace and development throughout the world.

Togo welcomes the organization of today's briefing, in the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. It is being held, I would recall, after the sixth consultative meeting on cooperation on peace and security between the United Nations and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which took place on 13 June 2012 in New York.

In my country's view, those types of meetings show the need to further tighten the bonds between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, allowing those organizations to share, with the Security Council in particular, their experiences and lessons learned as regional stakeholders with real knowledge of the reality on the ground.

There are many examples of the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations, which is one of the major development strategies of the Common European Security and Defence Policy, whose principles were set by the European Council in Nice in 2000. We recall that, at the operational level, since the success of Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was carried out in accordance with resolution 1484 (2003) during the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, many other military and civilian operations have been developed by the European Union in collaboration with United Nations missions on practically all continents.

With regard to security sector reform, we welcome the European Union's support in working with the United Nations in countries such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Guinea Bissau.

In terms of counter-piracy efforts, Operation Atalanta, which was led by the European Union pursuant to resolutions 1814 (2008), 1816 (2008), 1838 (2008) and 1846 (2008) off the shores of Somalia, helped protect World Food Programme vessels that were sending humanitarian assistance to Somalia. Togo hopes that

that type of cooperation will also lead to determined action to assist the countries and organizations of the Gulf of Guinea, which are still suffering from the effects of piracy. We hope therefore that the upcoming summit on piracy in the Gulf, which will be held in April, will provide an opportunity to establish the areas of that cooperation.

The involvement of the European Union in promoting the objectives of the United Nations is not only operational. Indeed, the comprehensive approach adopted by the European Union aimed at preventing and managing crises by combining the diplomatic and political dimensions and the element of cooperation in development with operational measures is commendable.

With regard to financing, as Baroness Ashton just recalled, the European Union contributes almost half of the resources of the United Nations Development Programme and 80 per cent of those of the Peacebuilding Fund and is one of the major contributors to peacekeeping operations. In that regard, we welcome the announcement of financial support in the amount of €50 million through the African Peace Facility to support the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and the European Union training mission for the Malian army and its logistical support for the Mission. We hope that in AFISMA's transition to a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the European Union is planning to play an important role in mobilizing the necessary finances and logistical resources.

With regard to preventive diplomacy, my country especially welcomes the efforts of the European Union in a number of areas, including the Iranian nuclear issue and the rapprochement between Kosovo and Serbia.

In conclusion, I would like to say that, while the cooperation between the European Union and the United Nations has been dynamic, thanks to the daily exchanges between the two Secretariats, we hope that the close cooperation will continue to grow and become more significant.

Moreover, the fact that the European Union occasionally does not speak with one voice on some major international issues hinders vigorous cooperation with the United Nations. A comprehensive diplomatic strategy, both for defence and all global issues, would make the European Union a better partner in the resolution of the major crises that are shaking our world, in particular in the Middle East and North Africa, regions that are so close to Europe.

Finally, in order to prevent the actions of the two Organizations from overlapping in some areas, it is important that both Organizations bear in mind what the other is doing before making a new commitment. In that regard, it is important that due account be taken, in developing a comprehensive United Nations strategy for the Sahel, of the European Union's strategy on the Sahel, which has the advantage of showing the inextricable link between security and development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union. For us, today's meeting is important both from the standpoint of the role played by the European Union (EU) in collective efforts to support international peace and security and from the standpoint of the strategic relations linking Russia and the European Union — both major continental centres of power with great responsibilities for the situation in Europe and, more broadly, in the Euro-Atlantic region. In that context, we are generally satisfied with the way our dialogue with the European Union has evolved, including at high-level summits. We note some proximity in our positions on many international issues on the agenda of the Security Council.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated multilateral development and improvements in the cooperation of the United Nations with regional and subregional organizations. That cooperation must be based on the firm foundation of the Charter of the United Nations, especially, its Chapter VIII.

The European Union contributes to strengthening multilateralism, with the United Nations playing the lead role, in combating new threats and challenges, mitigating the consequences of natural disasters and eliminating poverty and discrimination. We note the useful role played by the European Union as a major donor of development and humanitarian assistance and their significant contribution towards financing peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding.

We value the participation of the European Union in international efforts to help Somalia, Afghanistan and Mali, in the Middle East peace process and in looking for political and diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear programme, as well as in combatting

piracy at sea and in establishing regional counter-piracy capacities.

The inspiring potential of the European Union must therefore be used for the good of the international community and not for compelling individual members of the United Nations to take positions on certain issues at odds with their own national policies. The question of observing human rights must not become a pretext for selective political pressure.

General Assembly resolution 65/276, adopted in May 2011, did not change the EU's observer status; it merely expanded some of its capacity to participate in the Assembly's work. The resolution should be interpreted holistically rather than as a series of separate positions. We call on the European Union to follow the resolution strictly in both letter and spirit.

We are concerned about the European Union's increasingly active use of unilateral sanctions, both those imposed in addition to United Nations sanctions and those implemented without any corresponding Security Council decisions. In our view, such sanctions are counterproductive; they undermine the Council's prerogative and add to the burden placed on the populations of the countries on which they are imposed. Frankly, at times such actions amount to attempts to stifle entire sectors of the economies of independent States, and the humanitarian assistance that the EU sometimes provides is only partial compensation for such losses.

Having taken upon itself a specific role in organizing a dialogue on Kosovo, the EU should not stray into acts of pressure or force; such relapses have sometimes been observed in the region. Solving Kosovo's complex problems should not be effected only by the EU at the expense of the United Nations presence, whose role, as prescribed in resolution 1244 (1999), cannot be seen as an auxiliary or second-tier one.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that, despite the growing need for an effective mechanism for the division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations, including the EU, the leading role of the Security Council on issues of the maintenance of international peace and security remains unshakeable. It is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and to change it is out of the question.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you for convening this meeting, Mr. President, and to thank the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, Baroness Catherine Ashton, for her briefing.

The Republic of Argentina welcomes cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in this case, the European Union. In establishing the Security Council as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peacekeeping and security, the Charter of the United Nations, in Chapter VIII, also provided for a role for regional agreements or bodies, particularly in seeking peaceful solutions to disputes, as long as such agreements and bodies and their activities are compatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and as long as the Security Council is kept fully informed of whatever activities are undertaken or planned by such regional agreements and bodies for maintaining international peace and security. We would like to see the meetings now being held with the European Union and the African Union extended with similar regularity to other regional and subregional bodies that also deal with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would now like to discuss a few of the issues mentioned by Ms. Ashton in her briefing. Over the past two years both the Government and the opposition groups in Syria have chosen to try to resolve the crisis there by military means. One of the most worrying results of that decision has been the catastrophic humanitarian situation that exists not only in Syria but also in neighbouring countries, which continue to receive an endless influx of refugees. In that regard, we must recognize the solidarity shown by the European Union and its member States in continuing to respond to that humanitarian tragedy. Argentina believes that the unacceptable levels of violence and destruction in Syria have been largely enabled by the assistance provided by external players in arming and financing the parties to the conflict. In that regard, we concur with the appeal made by the Council of the European Union in its conclusions adopted on 15 October in Luxembourg for all States to refrain from sending arms to Syria.

Briefly, with respect to the peace process in the Middle East, I would like to say that my country holds and has always held a clear position. We consider it crucial to work towards a two-State solution and essential to renew and strengthen the mechanisms and strategies that the international community has developed to contribute effectively to that goal, with the understanding, as our President has said, that the

question of finding a peaceful solution in the Middle East should not be seen as a regional conflict but as a universal issue.

We also support Ms. Ashton's comments on the nuclear test carried out by North Korea and on that we do not have to speak in depth. Both the Argentinian authorities and the Security Council have made clear, forceful and prudent statements on the matter. Regarding non-proliferation, as in other cases that have arisen, Argentina is of the view that the issue should be resolved through effective negotiations. As the High Representative said, the imposition of sanctions cannot be an end in itself, and we share that position; they must be supported by negotiations. We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the cornerstone of a coherent non-proliferation regime and that all States should support it.

In that context, I would like to point out that Argentina has a very clear historical commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation. We are party to all of the export-control regimes and firmly support the efforts of the international community in that area. We do, however, understand that such efforts cannot be used as indirect means for limiting the inalienable rights of States that are party to the Treaty to develop, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In the case of Iran, Argentina believes that that country should cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency in order to regain the trust of the international community regarding the nature of its nuclear programme.

Argentina takes note of the crisis in Mali and recognizes the European Union's initiative on the issue. We have always stressed that a medium- and long-term solution to the Mali crisis cannot be a military one; we should prioritize the political process by holding free, fair and transparent elections as soon as conditions allow, as well as an inclusive dialogue as a necessary condition for the restoration of the rule of law, constitutional order and full enjoyment of human rights. We also believe that it is important to make progress with regard to the country's development in order to ensure security in the medium and long term. In that regard, initiatives such as the Brussels conference held on 5 February on the future of Mali and the announced resumption of the European Union's assistance for development are all measures worthy of note.

I cannot conclude without mentioning the European Union's support for the work of the Security Council in the area of women and peace and security, which the Ambassador of Luxembourg also remarked on. Issues concerning children and armed conflict and every area related to sexual and gender-based violence are a priority for Argentina, and we attach great importance to them within the framework of our human rights policy. In that respect, I would like to recognize the fact that the European Union is one of the parties that is most committed to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security. Like my own country, the European Union itself and more than half of its member States have adopted action plans on women and peace and security.

Finally, the promotion and protection of the rights of the child are a priority of European Union human rights policy, as can be seen in its many efforts to provide critical assistance to children affected by conflict and for the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers.

My country is a member of the International Criminal Court and has signed the Rome Statute. When it comes to the recruitment of children under the age of 15 to be used to play an active role in hostilities, the Statute states that such children are the victims of a war crime. Argentina has set that age in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We know that international human rights instruments are a bare minimum, not a ceiling.

In conclusion, I reiterate the importance that my delegation attaches to this dialogue with regional and subregional organizations in the framework of the central role of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Baroness Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and to thank her for her briefing on the contribution of the European Union to the achievement of United Nations goals, in particular the prevention of conflict, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

On the basis of its status as a model of integration and its concrete and substantial commitment to peace, development and the respect for human rights, the European Union remains a privileged partner of the

United Nations. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to it is eloquent testimony to that fact.

Today's debate continues the recent momentum launched by the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations aimed at strengthening their partnerships in order to deal with active or latent conflicts and multifaceted crises that destabilize entire regions and affect millions of people. Morocco attaches great importance to the role of regional and subregional organizations and to the cooperation of those organizations with the United Nations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and within the parameters established by Council resolutions.

The European Union has contributed significantly to efforts to promote the resolution of conflicts. Its cooperation projects and its economic and technical assistance provide significant support to socioeconomic development efforts. The work of the European Union aimed at entrenching stability and democracy strengthens international peace and security. With its influence and experience, the instruments it has established and its special relations with several regions of the world, the European Union can continue to provide essential support to international peace and security and to the strengthening of United Nations multilateralism.

In that regard, I would like to highlight the importance of the European Neighbourhood Policy, which seeks to strengthen Europe's relations with countries to the east and south; the Union for the Mediterranean, the goal of which is to promote economic integration and democratic institutions in the 16 countries of the Mediterranean basin; and the Instrument for Stability, which has strengthened European efforts aimed at preventing conflicts, managing crises and peacebuilding.

Morocco welcomes the efforts of the European Union to support international and regional efforts aimed at resolving the conflict in the Middle East, in particular through its contribution as a member of the Middle East Quartet. We believe that the European Union will continue to support the Middle East peace process and work to clear away the obstacles to the resumption of negotiations, so that the Palestinian people can fully enjoy its legitimate rights, including the establishment of its State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. All the people of the region, together with the international community, hope that 2013 will be the year of the prompt and effective implementation of the vision of two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side. No effort must be spared in making that vision a reality that is experienced by all peoples of the region, for the good of all.

The Kingdom of Morocco welcomes the sustained and ongoing commitment of the European Union to peace, security and development on the African continent. That commitment is not a new one. It has been progressively strengthened over the past decade to become an important vehicle for stabilization and development for countries in crisis or emerging from crisis, as shown by all of the work that the European Union has undertaken or continues to undertake in Africa, whether it is in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, the larger Sahel region or, recently, Mali.

With respect to the crisis in Mali, the swiftness of the French and African response was decisive. The European Union, for its part, has shown its commitment to stand with the Malian people and all of Africa, in particular through its support it has given to the reform of the Malian security forces, the contribution it announced at the donors conference and the announcement made as recently as yesterday by the European ministers for development of the progressive resumption of its development aid to Mali following the adoption of the Malian transitional road map.

The situation in Mali cannot be understood outside of its regional context, namely, that of the Sahel. The region is confronted with multifaceted and complex challenges. We hope that, once it is laid out, the comprehensive United Nations strategy for the Sahel will also receive the active support of the European Union.

With respect to the Syrian Arab Republic, we welcome the humanitarian assistance from Europe for Syrian refugees, and we call on the European Union to continue its efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations and the League of Arab States, aimed at putting an end to the horrific situation of the Syrian people by bringing about an end to the violence and by facilitating an agreement on a political solution ensuring a transition, in response to the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and in full respect for the country's territorial integrity and national unity. In that respect, it is important to support the work of Joint Special Representative Brahimi and to ensure that the

Security Council can take unified action to put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people.

Morocco supports and contributes to international and regional disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and to the development and implementation of a collective response to global threats, including terrorism. The weakening of the non-proliferation regime threatens to put the goal of nuclear disarmament, to which Morocco remains committed, out of reach. Based on its belief in the virtue of dialogue and diplomacy, Morocco supports the E3+3 dialogue and hopes that the Almaty meeting will make further progress towards arriving at a diplomatic solution for the Iranian nuclear issue.

At this point I wish to reiterate the importance of getting all Middle Eastern States to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We also count upon the European Union's support of efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Morocco, which enjoys advanced status in its relations with the European Union, values its commitment. We hope that the EU's cooperation with our Organization will strengthen both Organizations, as that is in the interest of the European Union, the United Nations and even beyond — it is in the interest of the entire international community.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to join others in welcoming High Representative Ashton to the Council today, and I thank her very much for her remarks. The European Union (EU) remains an indispensable partner to the United Nations and to the United States. It is an important leader in international efforts to address the world's most pressing challenges. Today's briefing illustrates the considerable benefits that strong United Nations partnerships with regional organizations can generate in the interest of advancing our goals of international peace and security.

I would like to highlight four areas that we find most noteworthy. First, the United States appreciates the EU's leadership in promoting stability in the European region. The EU has played a very important role in assisting Kosovo and Serbia in normalizing relations through dialogue, bringing together Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaçi for discussions as well as facilitating the historic meeting between Presidents Nikolić and Jahjaga.

We agree with High Representative Ashton that that dialogue has produced concrete results that will promote stability in the region. A resolution of the differences between Kosovo and Serbia will allow both countries to move forward on their respective European paths. We also welcome the efforts of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in helping to strengthen Kosovo's institutions.

We also commend the EU for its ongoing engagement in Georgia, particularly through its monitoring mission. We appreciate the joint efforts of the United Nations, the EU and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) over the past several years to help create space for direct dialogue between Georgia and Russia to address outstanding concerns and normalize relations. And we deeply appreciate the EU's contribution to peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Security Council-mandated European Union-led peacekeeping force.

Secondly, the United States welcomes the EU's efforts to advance peace and security beyond Europe. The Iranian nuclear issue remains a matter of serious concern for the entire world. We must continue to consult and work together to ensure that Iran cooperates seriously with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), comes clean about its past and present nuclear activities and reassures the international community about its nuclear programme, including by complying with relevant Security Council resolutions and its nuclear safeguards obligations.

We are pleased that the Iranian negotiating team has confirmed that the next round of talks between the five plus one group and Iran will take place in Almaty on 26 February. We appreciate the critical role that High Representative Ashton has played in our diplomacy to address that issue. It is time for Iran to discuss substance, and we hope the talks will make concrete progress regarding the international community's concerns about the nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

Also, we greatly appreciate High Representative Ashton's statement that the European Union strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's latest nuclear test and urges that country to refrain from further provocative actions. The United States will continue to take the steps required to defend ourselves and our allies. We will strengthen close coordination with allies and partners and work with our Six-Party Talks partners, the Security Council and other United Nations Member States to pursue firm action.

The EU is also a valued partner in the Middle East peace efforts, including as a member of the Quartet, which supports a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We remain committed to working with our EU partners, including through the Quartet, to encourage the parties to create an atmosphere conducive to the resumption of direct negotiations without preconditions. Only through direct negotiations between the parties can Palestinians and Israelis address all permanent status issues and achieve the peace that both deserve.

Turning to Syria, we fully share the concerns expressed by High Representative Ashton regarding the ongoing violence, grave humanitarian rights abuses and war crimes, and we agree that the international community must come together to help end the suffering of the people of Syria. The United States joins the EU in continuing its support for the efforts of Joint Special Representative Brahimi to find a durable political solution to the crisis in Syria.

Thirdly, the United States welcomes the EU's commitment to provide technical assistance to bolster security and development in societies emerging from conflict. In Afghanistan, the EU's expertise on policing issues has been critical in assisting Afghanistan in establishing and training an effective civilian police force. The EU's efforts complement the work of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States and other international actors working with Afghanistan to promote a stronger political, security, economic and social future for the Afghan people.

In Mali, the United States welcomes the EU's pledge to provide financial and logistical support to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali through the African Peace Facility. We commend the EU for its commitment through the EU training mission in Mali to train the Malian defence and security forces, with an emphasis on civilian oversight, the protection of civilians and respect for human rights. And we welcome the EU's efforts, in coordination with the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and other partners, to resolve Mali's interrelated political and security challenges through the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali.

In the wider region, the EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel, which is focused on capacity-building and countering violent extremism, complements the United States regional approach, including through the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, to strengthen the capacity of Governments across the Sahel to better address threats to peace and security.

Finally, we strongly support the EU's efforts to promote and protect human rights, both in its bilateral engagements and through the United Nations. The United States shares the EU's commitment to promoting and protecting the fundamental human freedoms, such as freedom of expression, combating gender-based discrimination and violence, and promoting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals. Respect for human rights is the cornerstone of stable democratic societies and essential to regional and international peace and security.

In closing, the United States reiterates its commitment to working with the European Union in support of United Nations principles and activities in the maintenance of peace and security around the world.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): At the outset, let me thank Baroness Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union, for her statement. Rwanda views positively these regular interactions between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, particularly the European Union (EU) and, in my region, the African Union (AU).

From the ashes of the Second World War, Europeans decided to come together and establish an economic and political union, which, five decades later, has succeeded in establishing peace and security on the continent, despite certain challenges such as Kosovo or Cyprus. Here, I would like again to commend Baroness Ashton for her role as mediator in bringing the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Serbia together in Brussels for a fourth meeting on political dialogue.

Based on its experience in making and building peace at home, the EU has been collaborating effectively with the United Nations, supporting peace and security outside the continent, particularly in Africa. In that regard, the African Peace Facility is playing an important role in equipping Africa with the necessary tools and means to prevent conflict on the continent, notably through capacity-building and support for an early warning system.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the action of the EU in Mali and in the Sahel. We have welcomed the decision to establish an EU training mission in Mali aimed at building the capacity of the Malian forces and providing financial and logistical support for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). Similarly, I commend the EU for its continuing engagement in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, particularly by supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In peacekeeping operations, Rwanda values the triangular cooperation of the AU, the EU and the United Nations. Support by the EU, mainly in the form of capacity-building, planning and financial support, has provided robustness to peacekeeping in Africa, particularly the AU-led missions AFISMA and AMISOM. Most of the time, support has been ad hoc, fragmented and sometimes politicized. There is, therefore, a need for a more coordinated, coherent, predictable and sustained United Nations and EU support to AU with a view to assisting the AU to resolve its structural and capacity challenges.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, the European Union has consistently advocated for the rule of law; protection of civilians, particularly for women and children; responsibility to protect human rights; and accountability. We share all those principles, as they are universal values that should guide each of us. In order better to achieve those goals, however, it is important that the EU and other partners give priority to peace and political dialogue, while strengthening the capacity of national jurisdictions. International justice and universal jurisdictions, when used genuinely, are important as means to end impunity for the most serious crimes. They should, however, be the last resort.

I conclude by once again commending the EU for its effective and important collaboration with both the United Nations and the AU in peace and security. We look forward to sustained and strengthened collaboration.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome Baroness Ashton to the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea highly appreciates the positive contributions that the European Union (EU) has made to the work of the Security Council, with its expertise in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and respect for human rights. Given the scope of the challenges we face today, such effective cooperation between the two Organizations is of utmost importance in managing crises across the world.

In that regard, we welcome the active role played by the European Union in maintaining international peace and security in its region and beyond, from the Balkans and the Caucasus to the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. Above all, we applaud the EU's increased role in promoting political dialogue and peaceful reconciliation.

Particularly worthy of note is the ongoing EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. We welcome that the presidents of Kosovo and Serbia have held their first meeting, mediated by Baroness Ashton. We believe that that first highest-level meeting is itself a meaningful step towards the normalization of bilateral relations, and we encourage the EU to continue its efforts in that regard.

The EU has also made great efforts towards resolving issues relating to the proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities on the part of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Those efforts have included the EU sanctions regime and the dialogue with Iran within the framework of E3+3 Governments negotiations. We hope that the EU's efforts will bear fruit in the near future.

The Republic of Korea appreciates the firm position that the European Union has consistently demonstrated regarding North Korea's nuclear programme. North Korea's recent third nuclear test — the two previous tests were in 2006 and 2009 — constitutes a clear and blatant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions and other international norms. We are quite confident that the Security Council, along with the international community, remains united in resolutely reacting and taking firm measures. Sharing a strong sense of solidarity in that regard, we look forward to the EU's continuing role in presenting the position of the international community towards the North Korean nuclear weapons development programme.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue is another important agenda item. The Israeli general election will soon result in the formation of a new Government. Fatah and Hamas are once again moving towards reconciliation. At this juncture, my delegation is of the view that now is the right time for the parties to reinvigorate the peace process by taking a new initiative.

As Baroness Ashton highlighted, the deadly clashes in the Syrian Arab Republic demand our constant attention. In Syria the death toll is still rising, and the number of people in need of external assistance is increasing every minute. Although recently the possibility of negotiations has been cautiously suggested by actors in Syria, the positions of each side still seem far apart. Both the United Nations and the EU have critical stakes in resolving the crisis in Syria and in preventing the situation from spreading into a regional conflict. Despite internal disagreement, the Security Council will continue its sincere efforts to forge common ground with a view to making an appropriate response.

Another situation of special interest to the Republic of Korea is that of Mali. We value the contribution of the EU in addressing the crisis in Mali in close cooperation with the United Nations and other regional partners. In that regard, we welcome that the EU, together with the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, convened a ministerial meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation of Mali on 5 February in Brussels. The EU's financial support for the rapid deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali and the economic development of Mali demonstrates its commitment to support the people of Mali on their path back to freedom and development. We also commend the EU's initiative to share its military expertise by deploying a military training mission for the Malian forces in the coming days.

We also appreciate the crucial role that the EU is playing in maintaining and strengthening peace and stability in Somalia in cooperation with the United Nations.

Before concluding, the Republic of Korea would like to applaud the EU's positive contribution in addressing global threats and challenges and sincerely hopes that it will further strengthen its close partnership with the Security Council, thereby making a substantial contribution to international peace and security.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Baroness Ashton to respond to the comments.

Baroness Ashton: Thank you, Mr. President. I will be very brief.

I just want to say again what a privilege it is to be here at the Security Council and to have had not only an opportunity to describe some of the pressing issues and how the European Union is responding to them, but also the pleasure of listening to members of the Council, both in a complimentary manner, for which I thank them, and in our common cause of trying to find the right solutions.

I end by simply repeating what I said in my remarks — that we will remain a steadfast partner of the United Nations. We will continue to work with the United Nations, as well as other organizations, in the pursuit of conflict prevention and resolution for a peaceful and more secure world.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.